

Smith, Tasha

From: Claire Matthews <cmatthews@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2017 1:52 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Proposed House Bill 7285 An Act Concerning Complaints That Allege Misconduct By Law Enforcement Agency Personnel

Dear Senators Doyle, Kissel and Representative Tong, as well as distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

I am Claire Matthews and I live in Essex CT, a beautiful river town in the lower CT river valley. I am writing to support House Bill 7285. I actually think you should amend the bill so that it's intent is fully realized and then pass it. A recent survey by the ACLU of Connecticut clearly shows that many Connecticut police agencies still make it difficult for members of the public to obtain information regarding complaint forms and processes easily.

Here are the amendments that the ACLU recommends and I endorse:

- 1) establish meaningful penalties for law enforcement agencies that do not comply with state complaint acceptance and investigation laws.
- 2) create a standardized complaint form that is compliant with best practices and translated into all commonly-spoken languages in CT, and
- 3) require law enforcement agencies to track complaint data and to annually report specific complaint information to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

I support this bill and it's amendments as a step in making our communities safer. When people feel safe and respected they are much more likely to protect that safety and respect by cooperating with social norms. When people feel threatened because of where they live, what they look like or how they speak, they are more likely both to act out and to be uncooperative with what is threatening them. As a nation we declare that "all people are created equal" but right now in CT not all people are treated equally. Until each of us as individuals let go of our biases and truly love our neighbor, we need specific laws to guarantee that we act like we do.

Amending and passing Bill 7285 takes a step building trust and respect in our communities and making CT a state that people will want to live in and be proud of. I urge you to look into your hearts and do the right thing. If an amended bill passes, and police behavior changes, we will begin to see more justice and less obstruction to justice.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Claire Matthews
3 South Cove Lane
Essex, CT 06426